

Quick Response (QR) Code as Part of Digital Muslim Media in Islamic Da'wa at the Qatar World Cup

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Abstract

A unique phenomenon occurred during the World Cup event in Qatar in 2022. Within a week of the Qatar World Cup, there were already 558 people who converted to Islam. Many soccer fans who specifically watched the World Cup were interested in deepening Islam and then converting to the religion. From the perspective of da'wa communication, the da'wa media through digital media carried out by Qatar using the Quick Response (QR) Code was a real effort to show the tolerant face of Islam to the world. The main purpose of this research is to explain the role of the Quick Response (QR) Code as a part of digital da'wa media in organising the World Cup in Qatar. This research is a type of qualitative research with a descriptive analysis. The article shows that the da'wa carried out by Qatar during the World Cup using digital media QR Code was part of the da'wa strategy by inviting people outside of Islam *bil hikmat wal mauidhab al-hasanah* and this method was very appropriate to describe a friendly and peaceful Islamic religion to the world. In general, the theoretical significance of this research is to contribute to the development of Islamic da'wa communication through digital media.

Keywords: QR code, digital Muslim media, Qatar World Cup

Introduction

The 2022 World Cup was the most prestigious competition in the world. The International Football Federation (FIFA) announced that 32 selected countries would compete in the 2022 World Cup. For the first time, the World Cup event would be performed in the Middle East. This event made Qatar the chosen host for the 2022 World Cup. The 2022 World Cup was different from previous World Cups because it was held for the first time in a country with a predominantly Muslim population. FIFA chose Qatar to be the host because it had a large economy in the Middle East Region, whose source of wealth came from world oil producers (Dewi 2013). Qatar spent around 200 billion US dollars, making Qatar the most expensive World Cup event ever. Qatar took advantage of several interesting things at the Qatar World Cup that year, so Qatar had an important role in presenting Islam in the eyes of the world.

Qatar was one of several Muslim countries that provided the best service to visitors and players competing in the 2022 World Cup. One of the optimal services provided was to furnish hotel rooms with QR codes (Musalini 2004). The purpose and benefits of the QR Code were to introduce Islam and Qatari culture to all visitors. The QR Code provided to visitors was translated into many languages. The available QR Code would lead to the Ministry of Awqaf Qatar page, which included an introductory guide to Islam in various languages. The code also included the logo of the Islamic Cultural Centre Abdullah bin Zaid Al Mahmoud. Coupled with several murals depicting the introduction of Islam in Qatar, this was the first time the Middle East region hosted the World Cup.

QR Code is a trademark code for a type of matrix barcode invented by the Japanese company Denso Wave. QR Code has features such as large capacity data encoding, high-speed reading, small file size, 360-degree reading, and a flexible application structure. The way this system works is that the user scans the installed QR Code. After the code is scanned, the system sends information to the server, and the information will come out. This system is expected to help someone get information quickly and easily (Priyanto Hidayatullah 2015). This system is made in the form of a website-based information system; therefore, when visitors want to see something but are constrained by distance, time, or other things, they can access it via smartphones, laptops, and personal computers at home or anywhere provided they are connected to the internet (Hermawan 2011).

On the other hand, several important lessons can be applied as a da'wa strategy. In other words, preaching can be done by inviting others to improve morals, and da'wa through state power is much more effective. Da'wa means to invite people outside of Islam 'with wisdom and good advice' (*bi al-hikmati wa al-mauidhati hasanah*). The Qatari government knew that the contingent coming was mostly non-Muslims. So, it was a good moment to promote Islamic teachings to them in a good way (Juwandi 2004). It was not necessary with words but with a real look so that they could see, hear, and feel the Islamic nuance. After they knew Islam, they would feel comfortable and peaceful. Then, others would become Muslims in droves. Another important role Qatar played in introducing Islam was

making hadith murals in public places, including in every corner of the stadium where national team players played. The mural used two languages, Arabic and English so that everyone could understand it. In addition, the Qatari government had also prepared Muslim scholars and volunteers to participate in the World Cup event. It was intended that they would be prepared to answer questions from supporters about Islam. It means that Qatar did not only host the World Cup in 2022 but also took advantage of the event by introducing Islam to the whole world.

Qatar displayed the best Islamic morality to its guests who came. Even though those who came were not all Muslims, they were still friendly and respectful. Qatar is the safest Islamic country in the world. Many people are attracted to Islam not because of the preaching materials but because of the beauty of morality. As an Islamic country, Qatar has become a good representative of Muslims. Qatar has succeeded in changing the face of Islam in the eyes of the international world. Islam, which had the impression of being ugly, poor, hungry, slum, stupid, and backward, appeared with a face that was handsome, dashing, intelligent, advanced, modern, and elite. The world also recognised Qatar as the organiser of the World Cup, with the grandest and most expensive facilities throughout the World Cup events. Qatar invested \$229 billion to build infrastructure, such as new stadiums, hotels, hospitals, airports and other supporting facilities. While Russia \$ 20 billion (2018 World Cup), Brazil \$ 11.6 billion (2014 World Cup), and South Africa \$ 3.3 billion (2010 World Cup). Da'wa, through state power, would be more effective, too. It was why Qatar, with its powers, prohibited all visitors from drinking beer and free sex.

In addition, the visitors were obliged to dress modestly. It was unlikely to be effective unless it was exercised by state power. There existed numerous invaluable insights that could be extrapolated to formulate an effective da'wa strategy, one of which was digital media. In essence, the approach to preaching involved encouraging the enhancement of morality and da'wa through the utilisation of state influence, resulting in a notably enhanced efficacy, proposes the efficacy of Qatar's da'wa activities. Therefore, then the main purpose of this research is to explain the role of the Quick Response (QR) Code as a part of digital da'wa media in organising the World Cup in Qatar.

Quick Response (QR Code) and Research Methodology

Along with today's technological developments, human activities to search for information can be facilitated by utilising smartphone technology. Because smartphone technology in the future will continue to develop based on what humans need at that time. With the advancement of technology owned by Android, the search for the information needed will be found more quickly. With Android users can find any information needed without the need to use a Personal Computer (PC) or laptop because the applications owned by Android are almost the same on PCs or laptops. To provide convenience to users, a new method was created, namely by using a Quick Response (QR) Code (Galiyawala 2014). QR Code is a type of two-dimensional image that displays data in the form of text. With

a QR Code, users can access a web faster than having to do it manually (Prasetia 2017). QR Codes can be recycled and reused. Using the QR Code must be done in a bright place or with sufficient lighting so that the scanner can read the code on the QR Code. QR Code can hold much information with 7,089 numeric characters and 4,296 alphanumeric characters.

Picture 1: Display QR Code



The main purpose of this research is to explain the role of the Quick Response (QR) Code as a part of digital da'wa media in organising the World Cup in Qatar. In more detail, this study describes the role of the Quick Response (QR) Code as a tool in broadcasting Islam. This research is qualitative, where the researchers analysed or interpreted data. The research method used in this research is descriptive analysis. The data was obtained from articles, books or other related references. The data from observation and literature review were managed using several steps, namely data reduction, where the researcher selected which data were needed and which were not. Then, the next step was to present data that went through a data reduction process. Afterwards, the data that had been presented were interpreted through a data analysis process. In this case, the researchers wanted to explore the significant role of the Quick Response (QR) Code, which was used as a digital medium during the Qatar World Cup football.

The Role of the Quick Response (QR) Code as a Tool for Spreading Islamic Da'wa

Da'wa of Islam, in the digital media, has become a phenomenon in preaching activities in the era of society 5.0, where the main component is humans who can present a new value through the development of digital technology (Soekresno 2000). Through social media, which is in the hands of humans today, Muslims can carry out Islamic da'wa with various contents that can generate benefits. The development of digital technology can

create an interesting phenomenon in today's digital Muslim community, namely the rise of global culture and the tendency of people to depend on digital media. Muslim preachers must make good use of technology, especially the new media. If not, it will affect the morals of the millennial generation, who seek their identity. With its connection with digital da'wa, the role of the media is very important and strategic in conveying da'wa. Da'wa media, through digital, can access information quickly without boundaries of space and time. The existence of digital media today cannot be separated from the patterns of people's lives. Internet-based information and communication technology is a staple of society, from the transformation of face-to-face da'wa to written and video da'wa through social media (Mostafa 2015).

Digitalisation, part of technological developments, impacts people's lives, with QR Code technology having an important role in the future. QR Code contains a matrix code that contains a collection of data in the form of a square, point, hexagon, or geometry. Usually, three small boxes are placed in the lower and upper left corners and the upper right corner. In general, QR Code has a square shape consisting of a matrix of small squares that allows for encrypting data. The main issue related to potential risks and challenges in the future is interoperability or the ability to cooperate. In this case, the interrelationship between the QR Code application and other applications passes through a protocol.

Digital media technology does not necessarily erode or eliminate traditional media that have existed before. Some people still need traditional and mass media, especially in da'wa. Da'wa can still be carried out face to face with one another or even in groups through writing and video shows. This phenomenon causes digital media users to be larger than traditional ones. What needs to be underlined is that digital media are not just based on technological sophistication but also on social and cultural values (Petrovski 2012).

Moreover, da'wa is an invitation, call, or appeal made with sound, words, and deeds. The purpose of this invitation is to invite all humanity to know more about the Creator and to be guided towards the right path. Da'wa contains Islamic messages that urge humanity to stay away from skewed treatment. An example of da'wa activity is what Qatar did during the World Cup. Qatar installed microphones in every stadium to echo the call to prayer when the time for prayer had arrived. It was done because many of the spectators were from the Middle East, meaning that they were likely Muslims.

Qatar also made QR codes in every hotel occupied by supporters and national team players. These QR codes contained hadiths, Islamic teachings, and simple definitions of faith. They also provided a place of worship for every Muslim who watched the match at the stadium. Also, there was a prayer room and a place for ablution. Qatar wanted to prove that an Islamic and Arab country was worthy of being the host. In practice, it succeeded in promoting Islamic religion and culture coupled with advanced capabilities in digital media.

Picture 2: QR Code Displays in Hotels at the Qatar World Cup



The Influence of Muslim Digital Media During the 2022 Qatar World Cup

Digital media is a tool encoded into a format that can be read by a machine that uses district waves (Pavithr 2015). Digital media can be viewed, distributed, and modified with digital electronic devices. Digital media can also convey information or messages through electronic networks or new media. Unlike older media, digital media can convey da'wa information/messages without time and distance limitations. Changes in society in conveying da'wa materials can be seen in the people's attitudes, behaviour, and characters. Every technology always experiences dynamic shifts and developments. Technology development is inseparable from human life and culture.

Social media, one of the latest technological developments, is the most effective way to do da'wa activities. Through social media, preachers can spread religious messages in the form of memes, videos, audio, infographics, and so on. To make the forms interesting, content on social media must be creative, honest, polite, and individual. Moreover, one important aspect in the development of the media is the way of addressing the audience because media messages are constructed. They are sometimes different from the reality. How we view media content determines how we behave towards it. This means that in new media, the audience is not just placed as the target of the message. The changes in media technology have pushed the audience to be more interactive with the message.

The rapid development of technology has opened an opportunity for preaching. Qatar, which had the opportunity to host the World Cup, had chosen to be an effective means of introducing Islam which is friendly, peaceful, and moderate. It is not surprising when many reports say that 558 people converted to Islam. Apart from the government's efforts, Qatari citizens were also very enthusiastic about the presence of the 2022 World Cup, where they took advantage of this opportunity to introduce Islam to supporters who came from

all over the world. The Qatari citizens welcomed the supporters by inviting them to visit their homes. The friendliness of the Qatari people in welcoming guests, having good manners when speaking, providing free lodging, and inviting the supporters to tour the neighborhoods made some of the supporters touched by the gentleness of the Qatari people. For example, a Brazilian family, under the guidance of Sheikh Hayyan Al-Yafei, converted to Islam.

Conclusion

The 2022 World Cup in Qatar has shown the significance of da'wa through digital media. Digital media are tools encoded into a format that can be read on a machine that uses digital waves. Digital media can be viewed, distributed, and modified with digital electronic devices. They can also be interpreted as a means to convey information or messages through electronic networks or new media. Understanding the excellence of digital media, Qatar made QR codes in every hotel occupied by national team supporters and players to promote Islam. The codes contained hadiths, Islamic teachings, and simple definitions of faith. Qatar did what in Islam is called da'wa activity 'with wisdom and good advice' (*bil hikmati wa al-mauidhab al-hasanah*). The Qatari government knew that most contingent were mostly non-Muslim. The 2022 World Cup has become the best moment for Qatar to promote Islamic teachings to them. With digital media, many non-Muslims were reportedly interested in Islam and converted to the religion.

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